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SUBJECT: UNDP CHUNG DONG-YOUNG'S CAMP FACING UPHILL BATTLE

Classified By: POL M/C Joseph Y. Yun. Reasons 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In designing his campaign leadership team and strategies, United New Democratic Party (UNDP) candidate Chung Dong-young has tried to integrate creative new outreach programs to directly involve the public. Chung's advisors are mainly former staff members from Chung's days in the National Assembly. Some also worked as staff members on former President Kim Dae-jung's 1997 campaign team. While Chung's campaign themes of family welfare and growth without discrimination are well received by the middle class, his campaign lacks momentum, and is struggling to project a convincingly distinctive platform. End Summary.

LEADERSHIP: DRAWING ON EXPERIENCE

¶2. (U) Chung has managed to rally the support of former liberal presidential candidates and has placed them in key campaign leadership positions, attempting to draw on their political experience and support bases. The campaign is headed by four co-chairs: UNDP chairman Oh Choong-il, and former presidential candidates Sohn Hak-kyu, Lee Hae-chan, and Kim Geun-tae. Chung chairs the main organ of the campaign, the Family Happiness Committee, and employs former presidential candidates Han Myeong-sook, Chun Jung-bae, and Choo Mi-ae as co-chairs. The campaign vice chairmen are UNDP Supreme Council Members Kim Hyo-seuk, Chung Kyun-hwan, Lee Mee-Kyung, Cho Il-hyun, Kim Sang-hee, and Yang Kil-seung.

¶3. (SBU) The majority of Chung's staff are in their 30's and 40's and are former secretaries and staff members from Chung's days as a lawmaker. Because they have been working as a team under Chung since he entered the National Assembly in 1996, observers say Chung had the upper hand in uniting his supporters during the fractious UNDP primary. Many of Chung's staff were also members of Kim Dae-jung's 1997 election campaign team, and are current or former National Assembly members.

COMMITTEES: REACHING OUT TO VOTERS

¶4. (U) Chung's campaign is centered around special committees designed to reach out to specific segments of the population and involve the public in creating the campaign's focus. The main body of the campaign is the Family Happiness

Committee, which focuses on developing the UCC (User Created Contents)-based Happiness Bank. The main function of the Bank is to receive policy proposals from the public through an internet home page and select some of those proposals as campaign promises. As of mid-November the bank had received about 4,000 proposals and had selected 19 of them as campaign promises. Other components of the camp include:

-- Economic policy: The Discrimination-Free Growth Committee, chaired by Representatives Chung Sye-kyun, and Hong Jae-young; and the 2020 National Vision Committee, chaired by Representative Moon Hee-sang and former Labor Minister Kim Ho-hin.

-- Regional Integration Policy: People's Grand Integration Steering Committee, chaired by Representatives Chang Youn-dal, Rhyu Si-min, and former representative Kim Doo-kwan; and the One Nation Unification Committee chaired by Representatives Yoo Jay-kun.

-- Social Convention: The Three Million Thumbs Volunteer Corps, responsible for taking charge of the mobile campaign via text message, chaired by Representative Bae Ki-sun and former Blue House Civil Society Secretary Hwan In-sung; the Clean Campaign chaired by Representatives Shin Ki-nam and Kim Hak-jae; the Culture and Arts Campaign, chaired by Representative Cho Bae-sook.

-- Anti-Discrimination Policy: The Gender Equality Campaign, chaired by Representatives Lee Mee-kyung, Yun Won-ho, and Kim Sang-hee; the Seniors' Election Campaign chaired by Sun Jin-kyu and Cho Hong-kyu; the Disabled Voters Campaign, chaired by Representatives Jang Hyang-sook, Kim Soo-kyung, and Jang Min-ho; and the Youth Campaign chaired by Lee Dong-sup, Park Hong-keun, and Song Kap-suk.

THE CAMPAIGN: TOO LITTLE TOO LATE?

15. (C) While Chung's campaign is experimenting with new and innovative campaign measures like the UCC Happiness Bank, the campaign is having trouble gaining momentum. Despite his success in uniting his supporters before the UNDP primaries, the delayed selection process and Chung's thus far unsuccessful efforts to unite with other progressive candidates has left him with less time to effectively campaign and lukewarm support among voters. The public also feels that while GNP candidate Lee Myung-bak has done a good job of specifically outlining his economics-based platform, Chung's campaign lacks a distinguishing characteristic to set him apart from other contenders.

16. (C) Chung also seems to be struggling with a lack of enthusiasm from inside his own camp. At a party, recently, Chung is said to have complained that "nobody in the campaign cares," except, presumably for Chung himself. Not only are his staff members suffering low levels of enthusiasm due to his low support rate, but many of the legislators he has recruited are busy preparing for their own electoral bids in the upcoming 2008 National Assembly elections. The result is a general lack of energy in a campaign already suffering from an abbreviated and contentious tenure.

COMMENT

17. (C) Chung Dong-young's presidential campaign has experienced a string of setbacks and missteps -- his hastily cobbled together election team is another example of why his candidacy has failed to take off and he currently rests in third place in all polls with 13-14 percent support. The UNDP formed in August 2007 after the Uri Party dissolved pledging to differentiate itself from Roh Moo-hyun's former party. However, Chung's campaign team is made up of former Roh aides and Uri Party officials. If Chung was to have had any chance against Lee Myung-bak, he needed to motivate

citizen groups and NGOs. Unfortunately, his campaign team of lawmakers and former Uri officials has failed to excite anyone. Worse still, after failing to unite other liberal contenders under the UNDP banner, many liberal voters and politicians have given up hope for a Chung victory and are focused on the general elections in April 2008.

VERSHBOW